

Listening activities on THE PLANETS by Gustav Holst

The suggested listening activities are designed to focus on listening and to stimulate students to use both analytical and imaginative thinking. In addition, teachers may encourage students to translate what they have heard into some type of tangible art work.

It is not necessary to use all activities suggested for each planet in order to provide a valid learning experience. However, activation of both the left and right brain will make the learning more meaningful and memorable.

1. Predictive thinking

Before listening to the music for each planet, reveal the title and ask the students to predict what they think the music will sound like. Encourage the use of musical terms where possible. Consider all the concepts of music.

After listening, have the students report on how accurate their predictions were. Did composer Holst, capture each planet's traits in his music?

2. Analytical Thinking

1st Listening - Each worksheet is designed to focus attention on specific elements within each piece. Students are given freedom to write down events in the movement that impress them aurally. Encourage use of musical **vocabulary** - be sure students clearly understand the task demanded by each analytical listening activity *before* playing the CD. The teacher should work on the sheets with the students to develop an "answer key".

2nd Listening - After doing the analysis task, the teacher may provide another opportunity for analytical listening. This time the students should "check their answers" from the first listening as the music plays. This second playing will help them to correct errors, and it will help to reinforce elements that they noticed during the first listening.

3. Imaginative Thinking

Set the Scene for Imaginative Listening - The classroom environment must be conducive to this type of listening so that creative thinking is stimulated. Some ideas for creating room ambiance:

- Stick up some "glow in the dark" stars and planets on the ceiling and turn out the lights.
- Punch pin holes in an opaque piece of paper, and place the paper on an overhead projector. Throw the projected image out of focus. A starry effect will be achieved. Moving your fingers in front of the projection beam element will create a "shimmery" effect.

3rd Listening - Students should be given the chance to listen to the music in a manner which activates their right brain hemispheres. They should be allowed to get into a physically comfortable position, which could mean lying on the carpet with eyes closed. Provide them with the stimulus suggested in the lesson plan, and play CD

4th Listening - ask the students to listen imaginatively, they can show what they imagined through an artistic medium. They may write a poem, draw, or create some choreography. During this creative application stage, the music should be playing in the background.

Present the created works to the rest of the class. As students present or display their works, the music should be playing. The teacher and students in the "audience" should give feedback on how well the creators captured the essence of the **music** in their work.

4. Enrichment, Extension and Integration

After experiencing the above listening activities, students can view video clips which contains the music by Hoist and NASA photographs from Voyager and other space probes as well as scientific animation of the planets and their satellites. (Voyage to the Outer Planets and Beyond)

PDF of the teacher resource:

<http://www.bso.org/media/15173/ThePlanetsResKit.pdf>

NASA Footage:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M92Kx4IXGOM>